

Message Text

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PAGE 01 THE HA 03882 152318Z
ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 PM-05 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15
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R 151245Z JUL 78
FM AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2977
INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY SEOUL
AMEMBASSY TOKYO
AMCONSUL HONG KONG
EC COLLECTIVE
USMISSION USNATO
USLO PEKING

C O N F I D E N T I A L THE HAGUE 3882

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR CH NL
SUBJECT: CHINESE OFFICIAL VISITS TO THE NETHERLANDS

1. SUMMARY: DURING THE PAST MONTH, THE NETHERLANDS HAS HAD OFFICIAL VISITS FROM THREE HIGH LEVEL CHINESE GROUPS. THESE INCLUDE FOREIGN MINISTER HUANG HUA AND HIS PARTY, A GROUP OF STEEL INDUSTRY EXPERTS HEADED BY MINISTER OF METALLURGY TANG K'O, AND A NUMBER OF ACADEMICS WHO WERE HOSTED BY THE NETHERLANDS ACADEMY OF SCIENCE. THESE THREE VISITS ARE ONLY THE MOST RECENT IN A SERIES OF HIGH LEVEL VISITS WHICH HAVE TAKEN PLACE OVER THE PAST TWO YEARS, ACCORDING TO THE MFA DIRECTOR FOR ASIAN AFFAIRS (FRASER), WHO SAID THERE HAVE BEEN 20 SUCH VISITS IN THE PAST 24 MONTHS. THE GROUPS DO NOT VISIT THE NETHERLANDS ONLY, BUT ARE PART OF A LARGER PATTERN OF ALMOST CONTINUOUS VISITS BY CHINESE GROUPS THROUGHOUT WESTERN EUROPE. END SUMMARY.

2. VERY FEW OF THE VISITS ARE POLITICAL IN NATURE - THE FOREIGN MINISTER'S VISIT WAS AN OBIOUS EXCEPTION - BUT ARE RELATED
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PAGE 02 THE HA 03882 152318Z

PRIMARILY TO ECONOMIC, SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL MATTERS. THE VISITORS USUALLY APPEAR TO HAVE FEW DIRECT GOALS; THEIR VISITS ARE PART OF A GENERAL EFFORT TO BECOME FAMILIAR WITH WHAT WESTERN EUROPE HAS TO OFFER IN THE WAY OF PRODUCTS AND CONCEPTS. THIS "WINDOW SHOPPING" APPEARS TO BE PART OF CHINESE PREPARATIONS FOR THE DRAFTING OF THEIR NATIONAL PLANS WHICH ARE TO TAKE THEIR COUNTRY FORWARD TO THE YEAR 2000.

3. THE VISIT BY FOREIGN MINISTER HUANG, AS NOTED ABOVE, WAS AN EXCEPTION TO THE NON-POLITICAL NATURE OF THE SUCH VISITS. HE EMPHASIZED TO HIS DUTCH HOSTS THE FAMILIAR CHINESE THEME THAT EUROPE MUST PLAY AN IMPORTANT PART IN WORLD AFFAIRS AND SAID IT IS IMPORTANT FOR CHINA TO CONTINUE TO ENGAGE IN A MEANINGFUL DIALOG WITH EUROPEANS. FRASER COMMENTED THAT WHILE EUROPEANS ARE FLATTERED WITH THIS VIEW OF THEIR IMPORTANCE, THEY ARE TROUBLED BY THE DIFFERENT CONCEPT OF EUROPE'S ROLE - CHINA CLEARLY WANTS A EUROPE WHICH IS ANTAGONISTIC TO THE SOVIET UNION AND NOT ONE WHICH CO-EXISTS IN A CONDITIONS OF DETENTE.

4. THESE EXCURSIONS BY INFLUENTIAL CHINESE IN THE PAST TWO YEARS ARE AN OBVIOUS RESULT OF DEVELOPMENTS WHICH HAVE OCCURRED IN CHINA SINCE THE DEATH OF MAO. PRIOR TO THAT EVENT THERE HAD BEEN A ANUMBER OF DUTCH VISITS AND MISSIONS OF A COMMERCIAL NATURE TO CHINA BUT NO CHINESE VISITS HERE. THE CONCLUSION OF THE COMMERCIAL TREATY LAST YEAR BETWEEN CHINA AND THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY WAS ALSO A FACTOR IN CREATING INTEREST IN EUROPE AND IN VISITS HERE. IN THAT CONNECTION, FRASER NOTED THE APPARENT POLITICAL IMPORTANCE FOR CHINESE VISITORS TO GO TO BRUSSELS FOR DISCUSSIONS WITH COMMISSION OFFICIALS; THIS REFLECTS THE CHINESE DESIRE FOR A STRONG EUROPEAN COMMUNITY WHICH WILL HELP CONFRONT THE SOVIET UNION.

5. THE SUBJECT OF THESE CONTINUING CHINESE VISITS WAS DISCUSSED
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PAGE 03 THE HA 03882 152318Z

BY THE NINE POLITICAL DIRECTORS LAST WEEK IN BREMEN AND ALMOST ALL OF THE NINE COMPLAINED. THEY FIND THE CHINESE VISITS TO BE EXPENSIVE SINCE THE FINANCIAL BURDEN IS ALMOST ENTIRELY ON THE HOST COUNTRY AND TIME CONSUMING; BY THE NATURE OF THE VISITS, THE EUROPEANS FEEL COMPELLED TO RECEIVE THE CHINESE AT MINISTERIAL LEVELS. THE DUTCH REPORT THESE VISITS TO THE EC AND TO NATO, BUT IN A DIFFERENT MANNER - THEY REPORT ON THEIR OWN INITIATIVE TO THEIR COMMUNITY COLLEAGUES BUT IN NATO ONLY IN RESPONSE TO REQUESTS FROM THE NATO IS.

6. FRASER COMMENTED THAT THE STRING OF VISITS APPEARS NOW TO BE ABOUT FINISHED AS NONE ARE PLANNED FOR THE MONTHS AHEAD. HOWEVER, HE NOTED THAT THE CHINESE IN THE PAST HAVE REQUESTED HIGH LEVEL VISITS AT VERY SHORT NOTICE; FOR EXAMPLE, THE DUTCH ONLY HAD THREE WEEKS NOTICE OF THE VISIT OF FOREIGN MINISTER HUANG.

7. IN A FINAL ASIDE FRASER NOTED THAT THE ATMOSPHERE IN THE CHINESE EMBASSY IN THE HAGUE HAS BEEN BETTER DURING THE PAST SIX MONTHS THAN AT ANY OTHER TIME PREVIOUSLY. THE NOTICEABLE TENSION BETWEEN EMBASSY OFFICERS HAS DIMINISHED AND THEY MINGLE MORE FREELY WITH OTHER FOREIGN DIPLOMATS AND THEIR DUTCH HOSTS. AMBASSADOR CHEN HSIN-JEN, WHO IS SOON TO DEPART FROM THE

NETHERLANDS, ALWAYS USED AN INTERPRETER DURING THE EARLY MONTHS
OF HIS ASSIGNMENT BUT RECENTLY HAS DISPENSED WITH HIS INTER-
PRETER AND HAS CONDUCTED HIS CONVERSATIONS IN ENGLISH OR FRENCH.
FRASER SAID HE HAS ALSO NOTICED THAT SEVERAL OTHER EMBASSY
OFFICERS SPEAK FLUENT AND COLLOQUIAL DUTCH WHICH THEY CLAIM TO
HAVE LEARNED IN A LANGUAGE TRAINING INSTITUTE IN PEKING.
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